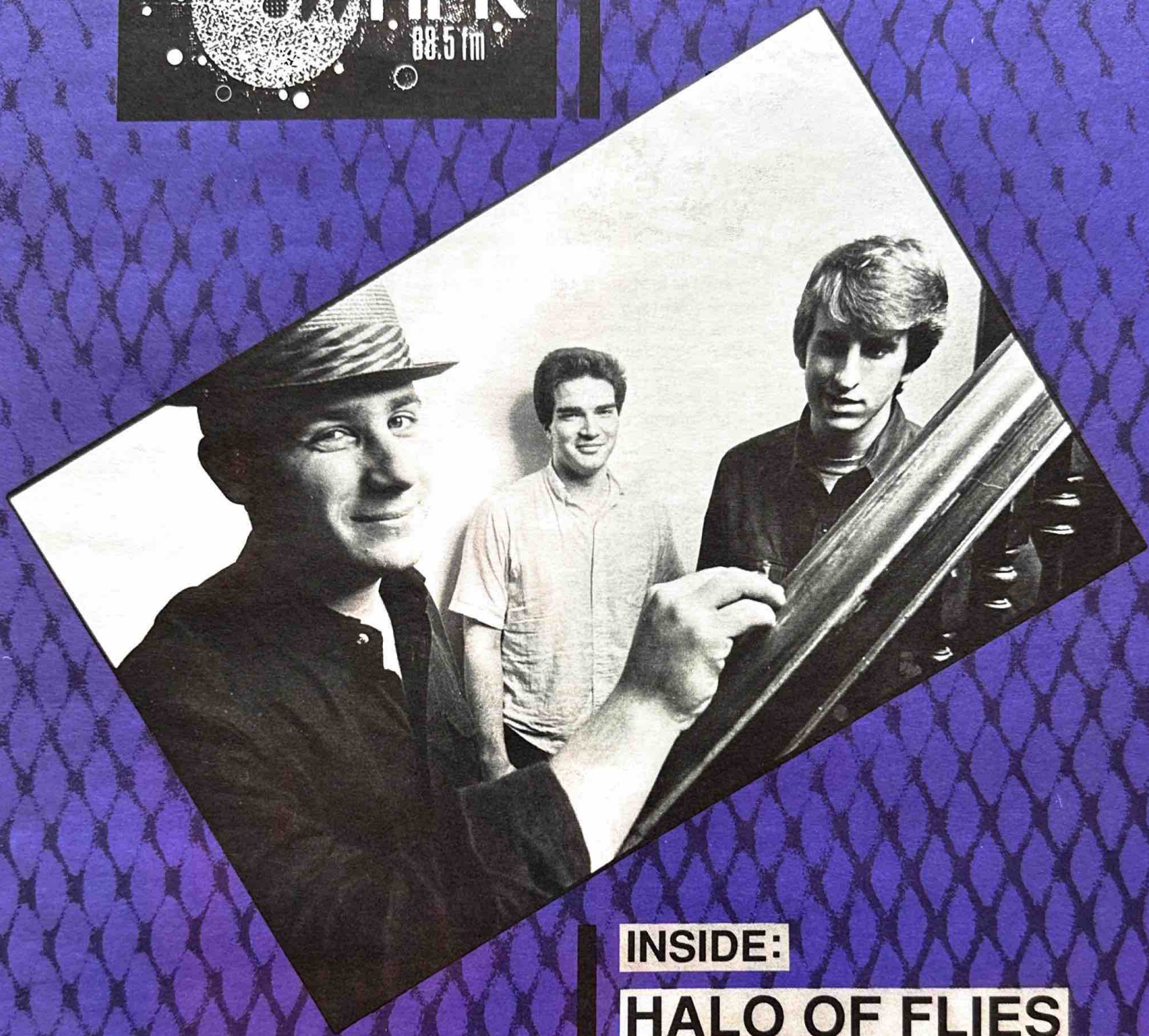


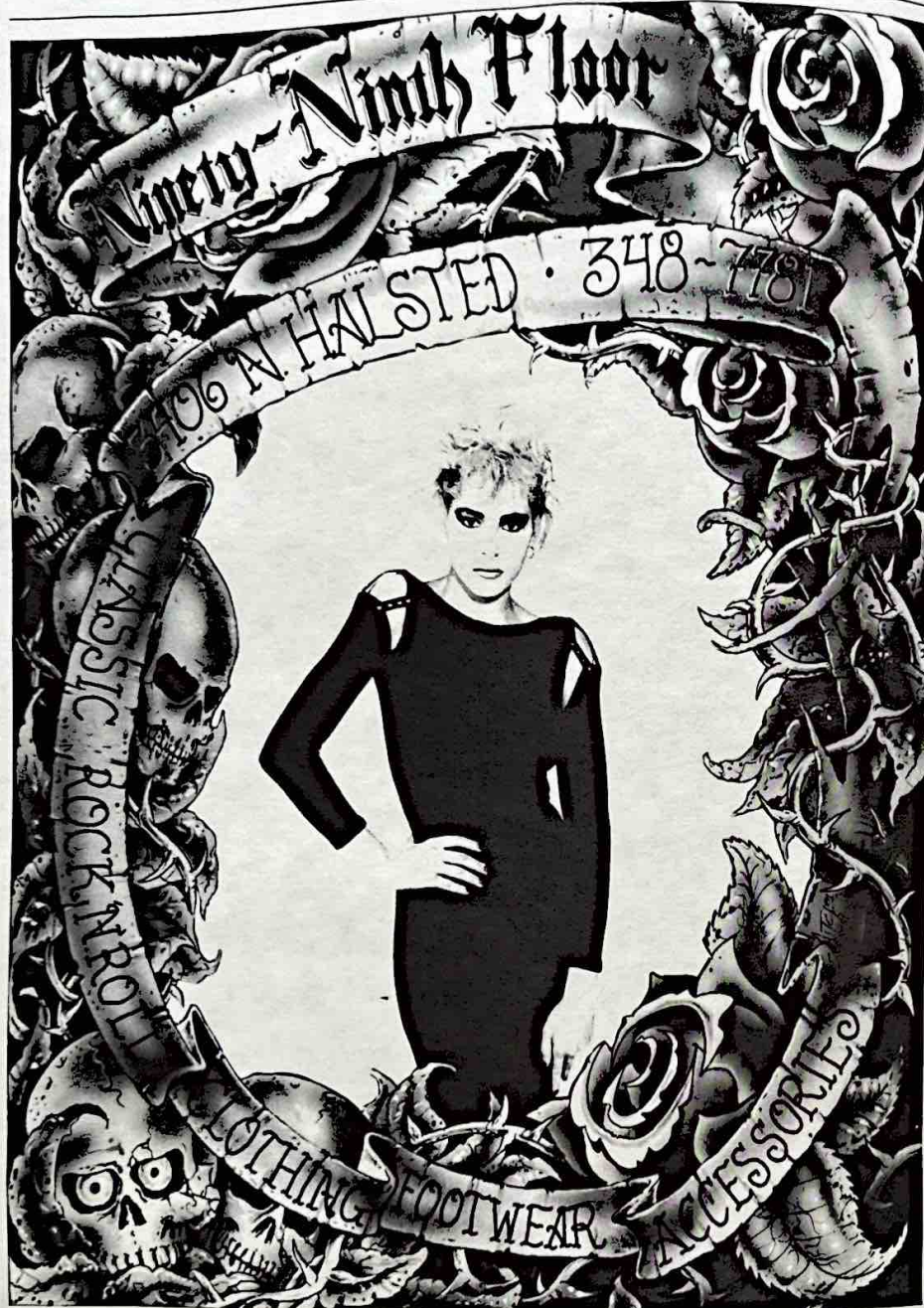


INSIDE:

HALO OF FLIES

SCRAWL

UNGH!



WHPK
88.5 FM

WHPK MAGAZINE

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I wanted to take some time to share my thoughts on college radio, and on radio in general. The subject has weighed heavily on my mind lately; issues and ideas abound.

Most people's tastes in music are shaped primarily, if not entirely, by radio. When a person hears a song that he/she likes, he/she finds out the name of the song and artist, and buys the record. If he/she doesn't hear much of anything worth liking, then chances are good that music will not become a part of that person's life. Record companies and radio stations, it seems, would benefit from offering the widest possible variety of art. People's tastes are varied, and the more variety there is in your programming (or your artists), the more people you are likely to appeal to. It's logical to think of it that way; unfortunately, the reality is quite different. There is some diversity among stations, to be sure (for instance, "classic rock" stations, "light rock" stations, "Top 40" stations, etc.), but they leave a lot to be desired if you're the kind of person who wants more.

The purpose of college radio stations has historically been to provide a medium for artists who are (or are perceived as being) commercial risks for other stations. (I use the terms "college" and "non-commercial" interchangeably; although not all non-commercial stations are college stations, and vice-versa, I think you get my drift.) Lately, there has been a push toward increasing commercialization of college radio stations. Most, if not all, of the major record companies in the United States have "college divisions" which are dedicated to imposing major-label tastes on the traditionally independent college station. This is not a completely bad thing; after all, for instance, it allows many college stations with meager resources to build a library. However, it is becoming more and more apparent that artists on smaller, independent labels are finding airtime harder and harder to secure. With so many major-label artists concentrating heavily on the college market, there is a decided glut. Worse, major labels sometimes resort to putting subtle and not-so-subtle pressure on college stations, threatening to cut service to stations which do not play their releases.

As the folks at Skyclad Records phrased it in an elegantly worded statement that was sent to WHPK, everybody loses when this happens. The *listener* loses, because what draws many listeners to the lower frequencies on the FM dial, where the college stations rule, is diversity of programming. When the artists on independent labels are forced

LET'S PAUSE FOR A WORD FROM OUR EDITOR

out, diversity is eliminated too. What's to keep a listener listening to REM on WHPK, for instance, when they can hear it on WXRT? The *stations* also lose. One of the glorious things about working at a college station is the tremendous freedom that individual DJs enjoy in programming their show. If stations are forced to maintain rigid playlists, DJs lose their flexibility, and the shows lose their color. I think that I can speak for many DJs when I say that it wouldn't be much fun to come in for two hours a week and play songs off a list (and not get paid for it, either). Ultimately, even the *record companies themselves* lose. A sizeable portion of the record-buying public will undoubtedly lose interest in much of the music that goes out over the airwaves. Stripped of diversity, it will sound to many people's ears like "product" that was designed with a certain crowd in mind, i.e. a "college" crowd. The music will cease to be spontaneous, becoming a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

That's why I am proud to present (gracefully steering the discussion back to the magazine) the three bands featured this quarter. Two of them, Halo of Flies and Scrawl, have hooked up with flourishing independent labels (Twin/Tone and Rough Trade) after self-releasing vinyl. In the case of Halo of Flies, leader Tom Hazelmyer continues to run his own label, Amphetamine Reptile Records, which puts out vinyl on the basis of quality, not quantity. The third band, Unghl, still functions on a local level, but by their sound, it is obvious that they are destined to follow the path taken by Halo of Flies, Scrawl, and countless other bands over the last ten years.

This issue, then, is dedicated to independence. Support independent artists. They need your help.

DINNER WITH SCRAWL

"I had dinner with him/her/them and he/she/they said ... " These days, it's fairly common to say that you had dinner with so-and-so. It's understood that what is meant by that is that the speaker is on friendly, perhaps intimate, terms with the person/people in question. It's the modern, civilized way to drop names.

So what makes the following interview interesting is that WHPK's Mike Newirth and Anthony Star actually did have dinner with guitarist/vocalist Marcy Mays and drummer Carolyn O'Leary, two-thirds of Columbus, Ohio's Scrawl. The third member of the band, bassist/vocalist Sue Harshe, was at a bar with friends, and did not participate in the interview.

A brief introduction to Scrawl: they have carved a niche among fresh new acts with a sound combining equal parts of innocence, exuberance, pathos, and sarcasm. A critic might use the adjective "rough-hewn" to describe their folk-, do-it-yourself style. Following a well-received and independently released debut, *Plus, Also, Too*, Scrawl was signed to Rough Trade Records. Any fears that the band might lose its originality were quickly dispelled with the release of their first Rough Trade platter, *He's Drunk*.

We're ready ...

MN: How and when did Scrawl come about? When did you start playing and recording?

MM: Sue and I knew each other. I was in this band in Athens, Ohio, and we got offered a gig opening for the Meat Puppets in Columbus. Athens is about an hour and a half away. That was the first real Scrawl gig, with Carolyn. We were like, "Oh my God, we have to do it." We didn't have a drummer — it was just me and Sue at that time, and a friend told us about Carolyn. So we got together just for that gig, and we didn't really know

if we would stick together, and it went on that way for like a year. We would do a gig, then, well, OK, maybe we'll do another. We had all these original songs and we didn't really know what we wanted to do. We were just kind of in a band; we didn't think about the future. Some people in Columbus said, "We'll give you money if you make a record." So they gave us money and we did the first record. I'm not sure if you have ever seen it — *Plus, Also, Too*?

MN: We're the only people at the station who have it.

MM: Oh, wow, it's real hard to get. But they gave us money to do that, and we did it. At first we didn't know what to do with it after we made it. We didn't know anything about what we were supposed to do. We finally got it out about eight months after we recorded it.

MN: That was in '86?

MM: We actually recorded parts of it in '86.

MN: It came out in '87?

CO: Yeah.

MN: I first heard about it in fanzine reviews in '87.

MM: It took a long time to get it out, because we were independent — we weren't even on an independent label, it was completely done by us. Then it took, like, three or four months before we figured that we were supposed to be sending it to people. It was like, "We should be doing something with these records in my bedroom." And that's pretty much how it all got started. It was other people. If nobody had given us money, we probably wouldn't have done it.

CO: We kind of talked about it.

MM: But we weren't ... None of us had money.

MN: Why was it done in such a small quantity?

CO: That's all the money we had to press it.

MM: We did it ourselves. First we did

500, and we ended out sending out about 200. A friend of ours did it — he told us that we should send it to record companies and fanzines and stuff. We got rid of those, and rounded up some more money and printed 500 more. After that we were like, "We can't do this again." It's fairly expensive.

AS: Are there any differences between the two editions?

MM: Not between the first 500 and the second 500. There is one thing — there's a B on the ...

CO: On the binding or the jacket.

MM: There is either a B on the jacket or it's actually on the label or the plastic part of the record.

AS: The B means it's the second pressing?

MM: Yeah, B means it's the second 500.

MN: He's a record collector.

AS: I know some people who have it, so it's around in Boston.

MM: Yeah, in certain places you could get it. It's amazing, the weird places. Somebody had it from Oregon — they must have gotten it from K. It's going to be rereleased by Rough Trade in early March.

MN: Really?

CO: It's different, it's remastered.

MM: It's remastered. It's a little bit cleaner. You know how "Gutterball" sounds? It's really dirty.

MN: That's true. I left my copy at home — fragile sleeve, rare record, I didn't want to have it with me.

MM: Yeah, and the cover on that one is really cool.

AS: I love the way it's like a record from the 60s — cardboard with paper pasted on it.

MM: Isn't that neat? I love that too.

MN: So it'll be reissued in March?

MM: I think. Then the two records will be out on CD, on one CD.

AS: How does the remastering sound? Do you like the cleaner sound?

MM: Yeah, you can hear Sue. The problem with the first record was that when we recorded it, you could hear Sue, but when the record came out, you



Courtesy of Rough Trade

couldn't really hear her singing. You'll be able to hear her backup vocals. I'm still partial to the first one, because it's the first one, but I think it (the reissue) sounds good. It's not that drastic a change. It's a little bit cleaner.

AS: Will you keep the same cover?

MM: Oh yeah, the exact same cover. I'm sure they will make it a little glossier.

CO: And they're going to change the wording on the back

MM: Because it's out on Rough Trade.

MN: It sounded real spontaneous and low-fi to me.

CO: It was 8-track.

MN: Was that intentional?

MM: Well, it was all we had money for. [Waitress appears] Do you know what you want?

CO: We're going to split an order of Nachos.

MM: I'd like a house salad.

CO: I'd like a house salad as well. What kind of dressing do you have?

Waitress: Blue Cheese and French.

[We pause to finish ordering.]

MN: So you recorded *Plus, Also, Too* in someone's basement?

CO: A friend of ours had a studio set up in his basement.

MM: It was really weird because when you sang the vocals, you were the only one who could hear it. I was so uptight, because I knew his mom and dad were

upstairs watching TV, and if they could hear me downstairs singing "Sad", and you know, "Sad" has the word "fuck" in it ... I kept thinking, "I can't sing it." But it worked out just fine. Then we did three of the songs on 16-track — "Afterthought", "Loser", and "Slut."

MN: That's interesting. I was just listening to the record today, and those songs sound considerably different.

MM: We didn't use all 16 tracks — we used, like, 12. The less tracks you can get away with, the better, sometimes. *He's Drunk* is 24-track.

AS: Were you able to find something to do with each track?

MM: What we basically did was have 4 mikes on the amp, and choose the one we liked the best. So it's not like we used all 24, just that we had more options. We recorded it all in one big room.

AS: So that was in a real recording studio?

MM: That was at Paisley Park in Minneapolis.

MN: That's where Prince records, isn't it?

MM: Yeah.

MN: I saw that on the jacket.

MM: I know. That was wild.

AS: The new *Replacements* album was recorded there.

MM: Yup, that's what we heard. Haven't heard it yet.

AS: Take your time.

MM: I heard the single, so ...

MN: What was the response to *Plus, Also, Too* like?

MM: Really good. It was good enough to get us three label offers.

AS: That was *Rough Trade*, *Homestead*, and ...

CO: *Twin/Tone*.

MM: So it was good. We were really surprised, because we kind of just did it, thinking, well, we have these songs, maybe we'll put out a record. We weren't really expecting anything.

MN: Well, I saw lots of fanzines notice ...

MM: I think the big deal was when Robert Christgau reviewed it and gave it a B+, and then it got a little thing in *Spin*, with a color picture of the cover, in the underground section ... We only got one very bad review.

MN: That must have been depressing.

MM: It was funny because the guy said that if you like jangly REM guitars, you'll like this band. I was like, "Where does this guy come from?"

MN: You probably sent it to a hardcore zine or something.

MM: Yeah, it was.

MN: I might have said the same thing if I heard the record 4 or 5 years ago.

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I know a lot of bands that have gotten themselves to the point where they can't do a certain kind of song because it sounds out of place. That's something that we have been pretty good at avoiding so far.

DINNER

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MM: That's true.
MN: You don't have to answer this if it's personal about the band, but I'm wondering why you picked *Rough Trade* over *Homestead* and *Twin/Tone*.
MM: Oh, they flew to Ohio to see us, and that made a big impression. They had this definite thing, they were very definite about what... "This is what we'll do, and this is when we'll do it." And at the time we were all so confused, and we didn't know exactly when we were going to put another record out, and it... They were real attentive, and they offered us more money.
MN: Good reason. When did you start playing outside of Columbus?
MM: We played in New York, like, three times. Gerard Cosloy set us up with two gigs in New York.
MN: Was that with *White Zombie* and *Nice Strong Arm*?
MM: Yeah, definitely... Then he set up another one with Christmas at Maxwell's. That was great. We played Columbus, and we would play Cincinnati every now and then, and then we would go to New York. It was really weird. We never played regionally very much.
AS: Were you surprised to come to New York and play with big bands, and have people know all about you?
MM: Yeah, we were, because in Columbus, you just don't get that much attention. We don't have college radio—it's a real small scene, and you don't really realize what's going on.
MN: What has this tour been like?
MM: We've always had fun on stage, so that hasn't really changed. We've always been pretty much the same, don't you think?
CO: Yeah.
MM: We're probably tighter—touring does that. We haven't had anywhere to practice for five or six months, so the only time we practice is when we're on stage. Consequently, we don't have many new songs right now. We're not real worried about that though. *He's Drunk* has been the next step. It's a good record; we kind of... It was rushed. And we had to do it. I think it's pretty good considering our mental state when we were doing it. We were all just like, "What are we doing?"
AS: You weren't sure if you wanted to continue having a band, or...
MM: Well, we knew that, but we had been this real laid-back band for two and

a half years and all of a sudden we were getting label offers and trying to take care of business. I let it get way too scary for myself and I was like, "Oh my God, we have to answer this fan letter today, we have to send this person this today..." And it got to the point where we were forgetting that we were in a band, that was how I was. Finally it settled down. You know, it's so flattering to get mail, that you want to answer it all, not that there were like stacks of it or anything, but for me to answer one letter a year is a big deal, because I never answer mail. That's the way I am.
MN: I didn't get *Plus, Also, Too* until a few months ago, after I had been hearing about all the record deals. It struck me as being like what *Beat Happening* does—a very low-key personal thing. And now you're on *Rough Trade*, home of *Pop Will Eat Itself*.
MM: We are in some good company.
MN: I could never see you as being a real self-conscious "rock and roll" band...
MM: It happened for maybe a couple of months, it wasn't any fun. We're just mellow now—we're in no hurry.
MN: How do audiences usually respond to you? Do you think having a new record out has helped at all?
MM: It's weird. People know the songs.
CO: They stand there and you can see them singing.
MN: You'll probably see me doing that.
MM: It [*He's Drunk*] has definitely gotten a lot more airplay than *Plus, Also, Too*, because it had better distribution.
CO: It had label backing.
MM: So people would be more likely to pick it up. And it got good reviews, too.
MN: I haven't seen too many reviews of it yet.
MM: Well, there was the *Spin* thing.
MN: Did *Spin* review *He's Drunk*? Did they like it?
MM: It was a mixed review. I think they liked it, but it was a really strange review. It was kind of hard to figure out what was going on. But there was a great big picture and everything. It was really cool. It hasn't gotten as many reviews, but as soon as you get onto a label like *Rough Trade*, the fanzines are less likely to review it 'cause you're not the new thing any more, even though we are still kind of the new thing.
MN: Do you think *Plus, Also, Too* is going to wind up being one of those records that everybody wants? One of the great lost records?
MM: Yeah.
AS: Well, reissuing it'll help.
MM: [pointing to some nacho sauce] What is that?

AS: It's really hot.
MM: [choking] Yes, it is!
MN: I think that's what I'm getting on my dinner. I'm actually real happy to hear that you're reissuing it because I keep on telling people about it. I've put "*Gutterball*" and "*Afterthought*" on tons of tapes.
MM: "*Gutterball*" sounds better; that's a good song. I would like to redo that live on a record some day.
MN: Do you still play a lot of stuff off *Plus, Also, Too*?
CO: Yeah.
MM: We don't have a lot of songs right now.
MN: Do you think people are responding better to you? I remember when I saw you at CBGB's—granted, it was a *White Zombie* crowd—a lot of people had no idea what to make of you.
MM: We're getting to the point where we're the headlining band. That makes a big difference.
CO: People are there to see you.
MM: And when they're coming to see you, they know more about the songs. People are definitely beginning to become a *Scrawl* crowd. When we open for bands that we're not really in the same league as, like, bigger than us, the crowd isn't real responsive, but they usually come up like half an hour later and say that they liked it. They won't do it right away.
AS: How big have your biggest shows been?
MM: Olympia, Washington was pretty big—Calvin [Johnson, from *Beat Happening*] set up that show. We played with *Firehose*, which was a real big show. We also played in Riverside, California, with *Firehose*, which was a real big show. We do really well opening for *Firehose*. We get a good response.
MN: I'd rather see you than *Firehose*.
MM: Well, their audience... [food arrives] Oh wow, thank you!
AS: Do their audiences tend to know about you?
MM: I don't know if they know about us or not, but they tend to like us. Is that an orange or is it a lemon?
MN: It looks like a lemon to me.
CO: It's a lemon.
MM: [tasting it] Oh! It's a lemon.
CO: There's quite a few lemons on here.
MM: I'm not eating mine.
CO: I'm not quite sure what to make of this.
MN: How does the song writing divide up?
MM: I write 99% of the lyrics and maybe 25% of the songs by myself. And then

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DINNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

we kind of all three ... Sue wrote one song all by herself on *He's Drunk*, which is "1=1", and then we all three collaborate on the rest.

MN: How do you arrange the vocals? Is it mostly your singing?

MM: I usually sing them.

MN: There is some degree of trade-off, especially on the new album.

MM: It's pretty haphazard — we don't really think about it.

CO: When we were recording, sometimes the engineer was like, "Oh, maybe you should just sing that by yourself."

MN: Usually we just said, "You sing that line, I'm out of breath." There are actually lines on the record that we're like, "Who's singing that? Is that me or Sue?" We can't figure out who it was half the time.

MN: Your lyrics seem to have a unique personal viewpoint. Are they more based on personal experience, or more about what you observe?

MM: It's a combination. I have to have outside information ...

MN: Do you see it more as recounting or narrative?

MM: It's not narrative. I think it's just my way of working through things. Sometimes it's narrative, but a lot of the time the "she" or the "he" is not a specific person.

MN: Where does a song, for instance, like "Gutterball" come from?

MM: That came from a woman we saw one day walking down the street.

CO: That's kind of a narrative.

MM: Yeah, but it's kind of like, one image will be narrative, and then we'll combine it with other things. But it does say "This time I mean what I say," which has nothing to do with her, obviously. We saw a woman walking down the street, and we heard someone say, "God, she's a real gutterball." She was a street woman. That just stuck in my head, and I was writing lyrics one day ...

MN: Have you just been writing lyrics, or do you also write poetry?

MM: No. And I don't even really write lyrics. What I do is just write, and when we go to do a song, I'll read through all these pages and I'll pick out certain lines, and then we'll use those, and then we'll fill in around it. Sometimes I do definitely write lyrics. I've written a few poems, but I don't know if they're even any good. I've never showed them to anybody.

MN: Where do you ...

MM: This is so crazy, all these onions.

MN: Yeah. Where do you get more satiric songs like "Green Beer", "Great American Pastime", or "Let it All Hang Out"?

MM: "Green Beer" is about a party we went to where they served green beer, and we got wasted. It's basically a story.

MN: What about "Great American Pastime"?

MM: Sue, I think, had the idea. She wrote the bass line and the thing about "I want to go shopping, I want to go driving," and then we built the rest of the song around it.

MN: There are specific lines that are making fun of certain things, like the great line, "I can't make fun of the cross because God is my boss," which everyone quotes ...

CO: That was kind of a joke.

MN: And also, "Where did you get that thing? I got it at a shopping mall." Where does that fit in with what I see as more serious, like, "I Feel Your Pain"?

MM: I don't know. I guess everybody's got their humorous side. But those are songs that were just kind of like, it just depends on your mood when you go to practice that day. If we're acting stupid, we'll write "Green Beer". We don't feel there's any certain song that we can't play or write. We're not like, we can't do that, it doesn't sound like a Scrawl song. We've never been that way. Anything we write is OK with us, if it's halfway decent. I know a lot of bands that have, like, gotten themselves to the point where they can't do a certain kind of song because it sounds so out of place. That's something that we have been pretty good at avoiding so far. We have some definitely country songs that we can get away with doing.

AS: For when you're down south ...

MN: Well, you have some of the more country-ish songs like "Breaker, Breaker", which really surprised me the first time I heard it.

MM: A lot of people have said that. I wonder why that is?

MN: Well, it's just a real charging, driving song.

MM: Hmm. There were a lot of people who didn't like "Breaker, Breaker" at all when they first heard it ... I think it's fun, though. That was just like a live song — we didn't know if we were going to put it on the record or not. Is that Blue Cheese or Ranch?

CO: It says Ranch House, but she told us Blue Cheese. It doesn't taste like Blue Cheese, which I'm happy about because I'm not very fond of Blue Cheese myself.

MM: I don't like it either ... Look at all these onions! Can you believe that?

AS: Do you not like onions, or is this ...

MM: I do not like onions ... [more food arrives] Oh that looks great, thank you! Should we put this on pause?

MN: OK.

[pause]

MN: Where were we?

AS: We got through song-writing.

MN: OK, I thought the songs on the first lp, had more of a — you might disagree with me on this — I thought that they were generally grimmer than the stuff on He's Drunk. Do you see any change in how you were writing between the two records?

AS: The songs seem more inward.

MM: On the first record?

AS: Yeah.

MM: They are probably a little grimmer, but you know what's funny is that a lot of times, people interpret songs in a grim way, when I don't think that they're really grim. Like on "Slut" — a woman referred to the song "Slut" as having self-hating lyrics ...

MN: I saw that review. I thought that was stupid.

MM: I don't think that's true at all!

MN: Where was that, do you remember?

MM: Was that the Village Voice?

MN: Yeah, it was one of those little boxed pieces.

MM: Some of them are grim, because I was younger when I wrote them. I've learned a lot since then.

MN: Are you satisfied with how He's Drunk turned out?

MM: Oh, yeah. It's a little slicker than I thought — not slick, but what's the word ...

MN: Produced?

MM: Some of the production is a little different than I ...

MN: That's how I felt. Do you regret that?

MM: Yeah, in a way. But in another way, we had to make a record then, or God knows what we'd be doing right now. We'll do better next time. There's so much to learn — God, we've learned so much already, and there's so much more we're going to learn. When we did He's Drunk we didn't know certain things that can and can't be done in the studio. If somebody told us that this can or can't be done in the studio, we believed them, and that's not necessarily what you should do.

MN: So the record has been received well, you think?

MM: Pretty well.

MN: Do you know if it's been selling?

MM: Yeah, it's selling OK. Not great, but OK. We don't have a CD out ...

CO: They're like 40%, 65% of sales right

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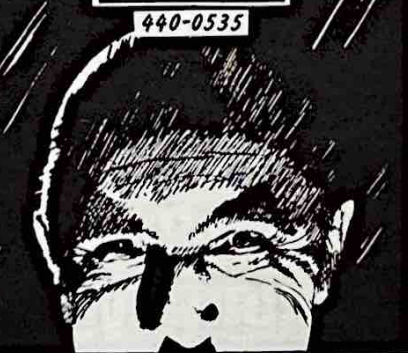
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DINNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

now.

AS: Boo!

MN: I hate that. I want no part of CDs.

MM: I say that, but shit, when you hear the quality, you can't deny.

MN: That's true, but can you imagine what Plus, Also, Too will sound like on CD?

MM: Like a scratchy old record on a CD.

MN: And it won't have a great jacket ...

CO: It'll sound like one of those 60s records that comes out on CD now.

MM: Yeah, but they have those little booklets. Sometimes those are kind of cool.

MN: It's not the same.

[Tootsie Rolls appear with the check]

CO: Oh, Tootsie Rolls.

MN: That's something you don't see every day.

MM: No.

CO: I know.

MN: They didn't have any fortune cookies, so ...

CO: I would hope not.

MN: How do you like being on Rough Trade?

MM: I like it just fine. We don't have anything to compare it to — I'll put it that way. They could be the best label in the world, and we wouldn't really know it; they could be the worst, and we wouldn't really know it. So they're fine. Everyone else tells us, "Man, you are so lucky to be on Rough Trade," so I guess we are.

MN: I don't know if you've seen this, but in the press release we received from Rough Trade, they referred to Scrawl as "a bunch of girls who like to drink beer and have fun."

MM: We've seen that.

MN: Who came up with that? That does not jive with your music.

CO: I don't think that we're really happy about that.

MM: I kept trying to get a phone call through to the person who wrote that, but I haven't yet. Oh, I don't know where that came from! I mean, whatever! I guess somebody thought that was the thing to say. No, it doesn't jive ... I don't know, I thought the same thing when I read that line. I mean we are ...

MN: Well, sure ...

CO: We are three girls who drink beer ...

MN: We're two guys who like to drink beer and have fun, but I'd hope there's more to us.

MM: You're right. By God, I'm going to

call them tomorrow. Like I say, it takes me two weeks to make a phone call. I've been meaning to do that for a while. I didn't even see the bio until ...

CO: We saw it at Harlings ...

MM: That was one of our first gigs [on the tour]. I hadn't even seen it before. I didn't even know what press kit they were sending out.

CO: It seems to me that they took a lot of time and were wanting us to help them write a bio and stuff, and it seems to me like we did, and the next thing you know, here's what comes out.

MM: It's OK up until that point. I think it's there because I said, "It sounds a little serious — maybe you should put something a little more lighthearted in."

CO: Well, then it's your fault.

MM: But I didn't get to see what the lighthearted part was.

MN: Do you think the fact that you're three women affects the way that you are received?

MM: Probably it does.

MN: Has there been a lot of stuff about that?

CO: Everybody makes a point of it.

MM: Which is OK, because it is definitely a rarity, I don't think it will be in ten years. I don't think that it will be unusual for there to be an all-woman group. I don't think people will still assume that you went out of your way to be an all-woman group. People act like we went 'way out of our way to be in an all-woman group, and I always say, "Did the Replacements go out of their way to be an all-male group? Did the Rolling Stones? Did they have two women who auditioned, and they didn't choose them?" No. It's just that that's the way we ended up.

AS: It was people that you know, and it just happened that way.

MM: And yeah, I think that I just felt more comfortable with Sue and Carolyn than with any guys I have ever played with. So that's what it's all about. I felt more comfortable writing the songs that I wanted to write. I wrote them before when I was in bands with all guys, and they would be like, "That's a shitty song, we're not going to do that." They were like, "No, that's not a song that we can do in this band." There would be, like, four guys, and then there was me.

MN: Do you think that you defy the expectations people have for "girl groups"?

MM: Yeah, I think we do, because most people think that we're going to be real sugary, or else real bitchy or slutty or something. That's the way that most woman groups get attention. If they start off just being themselves, and don't get any attention, it would be a very common

human thing to do to start gravitating towards what would get you some attention if you're going to play in a rock and roll band. And a lot of times, it's the slutty bands that get attention, because it's still the way things are. That's the focus. In our reviews, you can be sure that 50% of them are going to describe what we look like, at least for a paragraph.

MN: Yeah, I noticed that. It's stupid, but it's a facet of the band.

AS: Well, when we interviewed Halo of Flies, we didn't ask them what it was like being in an all-male group.

MM: Yeah, but it is something that you can't deny. It's still something that's unusual.

MN: I think that it's going to destroy a lot of people's expectations. In that respect, do your positive experiences balance out your negatives?

MM: Well, I guess I really don't know. I don't know what the other side of it would be like.

MN: Who did the art work on the LP jackets and sleeves?

MM: Me.

AS: It seemed really appropriate for the first record, but I was a little surprised when I saw the new record on Rough Trade and you still had the same ...

MM: Yeah.

MN: I thought it was cool.

AS: I liked it, but ...

MN: I missed the big, thick cardboard sleeve ...

MM: I did too.

MN: I don't think you can get those anymore. The last record I saw like that had one of those was the first pressing of Zen Arcade.

MM: That's really cool. I guess that I wanted to do the cover, because I couldn't see bothering anybody else to do it. It was like, "We can do it." Why worry? Of course we know what we want.

AS: You didn't want to put a lot of time into it?

MM: No, not really. I had a drawing. To me, putting a lot of time into it is like spending eight hours, two days in a row. It's like, "Oh, God, let's do the cover today." So that's putting a lot of time into it.

CO: We did that when we tried to choose the colors.

MM: Oh, God, that was so fun.

MN: What are your previous musical experiences?

MM: Carolyn played in a R&B band for a while. Sue has actually studied piano, and then she was in a hardcore band, No America — they were around for a while,

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These days, it's enormously refreshing to come across a band like Halo of Flies, who manage to strip rock music to its most primal elements without ever having their vision clouded by the awkwardness of premeditation or too much respect for history. Through several years of on-and-off existence in almost total obscurity (most of their records are out of print, and they just began performing live earlier this year), Halo of Flies have racked up to their credit some of the most genuinely perverse, emotionally-abraded guitar-angst music ever heard. This is in spite of the fact that

the course of their existence has been about as premeditated as the course of a tornado; strange as it may seem, Halo of Flies is something that *just happened*.

Halo of Flies — guitarist/vocalist Tom Hazelmyer, bassist/backing vocalist "Mac" (aka Tim) McLaughlin, and drummer John Anglim — were interviewed by WHPK's Mike Newirth, Anthony Star, and Nathan Ferguson, at Chicago's Club Dreamerz on January 14, 1989, on the eve of the release of their second 12" ep *Headburn* (Twin/Tone).

MN: How did Halo of Flies come about? When did the band form, start to record, etc. What was the original line-up?

TH: The original line-up was me and John. We all played together in a band in '80, '81.

AS: As Halo of Flies?

TH: No, we had a really bad name that we're not gonna say [Otto's Chemical Lounge]. Anyhow, we played together as that for a while, almost kind of doing the same thing to a degree ...

JA: It was a bad art-damage band. It had nothing to do with it.

TH: All right, dammit, the truth's out. We're all art fags.

JA: I saw your shoes today on a guy that was wearing a purse ...

TH: Dammit, those aren't art fag shoes, man.

JA: They are too.

TH: He's giving me shit because I got a pair of stylish shoes.

MM: Halo of Flies didn't start until '85. Everything before that was just kind of fuck-off stuff.

MN: Has there been a lot of shifting of members?

JA: Well, we've had one other drummer, but that was just the "No Time" single. He [Bill Bailey] engineered everything — it's his studio.

MN: Why weren't there any live performances up until last month?

JA: Because we want to be a studio band. This is just to get out of town, that's it.

AS: You're sick of being in Minneapolis?

MM: Yeah.

JA: They hate it, I like it. I don't know. Just to get out of town and make some money.

AS: Why did you want to just be a studio band before?

JA: It's 'way ...

TH: Cush.

JA: Yup. And I like dinkin' with production and all that.

MM: Tom's never been able to play the old material ... I mean, old as in a couple of weeks old (laughter) ... (pointing to tape recorder) The red light's so ominous.

JA: (really loudly into mic) Is it on?!

AS: I noticed you guys joking around a lot during sound check.

TH: It's because we hate each other. A lot. We're just masking our true feelings. (laughter)

MM: This is great!

JA: This is gonna be a lot of fun.

TH: ... just trying to smother up tensions, because the other two would probably be dead inside of a month, so they're just buying time.

AS: So touring proved to be a mistake?

TH: No, actually it's no problem. I'd kill 'em without any cause, so touring doesn't really matter.

MM: Ooh, isn't he scary?

MN: Is performing live going to be a regular thing?

TH: No.

AS: If this is going to be the second performance, what was the first?

MM: The Normandy Inn, KBEM Senior Banquet. We played three songs ...

JA: Tim, there is no past in this interview.

MM: "Can't Explain", "Wretch & Cringe"

JA: (lunging for tape recorder) Tim, there is no past!

MN: Okay, no past. So what you're saying is, tonight is going to be a historical event, and we're just lucky to be here.

JA: Oh God, yeah.

TH: We'll just put it this way: we want it down as saying we're gonna suck beforehand.

MN: I read a review once that said, "Halo of Flies are singlehandedly recreating the singles scene." Was it a deliberate decision to only release 45's?

MM: It was the cheapest ...

TH: It was all we could afford.

AS: So the whole limited edition thing wasn't just catering to the collector?

TH: Well, not at first ... It was just a scam ...

MM: Money!

TH: It was just that we could only afford to do a couple hundred singles, so we just played it up like we could do twenty thousand, but we're just doing two hundred ... we couldn't even sell those anyhow ... On the third single, I numbered them, like a thousand ... When I didn't number 'em, I couldn't give the fuckers away. And then as soon as I numbered 'em it was like, no problem. So from that point on it was just like,

number 'em just to get the shit to move.

MN: So it was more economic than anything else.

JA: Well, it also has something to do with not wanting to play old material. I mean, to work up an album's worth of material ...

TH: It was also the time limitations before. I'd only come back to Minneapolis for two weeks at a time so we wouldn't have enough time to do more than a single anyhow.

JA: Like, what was the first Twin/Tone one? *Garbage Rock*, that was two weeks, and all the others were pretty much two weeks ...

AS: So Halo of Flies is pretty much these two-week bursts?

MM: We were. Not anymore.

TH: That's another reason why we've

never done any live shows.

MN: Any plans to do an album?

TH: Kinda yeah, maybe.

JA: But we'd record the same way, two or three songs at a time.

AS: Would you ever put all the old stuff out on a record?

MN: Well, it's all out on a cassette ...

TH: That's kind of up in the air.

JA: It might get put out overseas.

TH: It might happen here, I don't know.

AS: On Twin/Tone?

TH: No, because then we'd be handing them the rights for everything we've done and we want to keep control ...

MN: What sort of arrangement do you have with Twin/Tone? Are you going to continue to release your own limited-edition singles and have them release

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John Anglim

HALO OF FLIES

FLIES

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12" ep's in regular press runs?
JA: We can't talk about the future, really ...
TH: Right now with Twin/Tone it's all up in the air.
AS: Was there a difference what you did for yourself and what you did for Twin/Tone?
TH: It's kind of, like, we weren't around there enough for them to pay attention, so we kind of did whatever we wanted and they never really noticed ... I don't even think they knew about the "No Time" single until I brought it in there.
AS: So they don't mind that you're putting out your own stuff?
JA: They can't mind.
MM: We're out from under contract now, aren't we?
TH: Yeah. I think at the time that the single came out the contract wasn't valid anymore, so ...
MM: We were under contract one year for *Garbage Rock*, and everything we've done since has just been a gentleman's agreement.
MM: How much of the "no heartfelt shit"/violence and decadence motifs of the band's music, graphic imagery, etc., comes from real life and personal experience?

(general laughter)
JA: One hundred percent!
MM: Do you lead really dangerous, fucked-up personal lives ...
JA: Yup!
MM: ... or do you purge yourself through your tunes?
MM: "Dangerous, fucked-up lives?"
TH: Naaah, not really.
AS: Let's hear stones, dammit.
MM: Make it up if you want.
JA: I think it has to do with a lot of blue-collar fantasy going on in today's society ... blue collar people wanting to kill and have sex in the streets (general laughter) ... I think that's what Halo of Flies is all about.
TH: Wait a minute ...
MM: (assuming intellectual voice) Well, I think it's more a Freudian-type thing ... anal retention ... bursting forth into the world.
TH: I don't think it has much to do with actions as opposed to ideology which is something I don't get into too much ... it kind of displays itself in the music but it's not really billboard time, like M.D.C. or something, where we're going to fuckin' wave banners ...
MM: Do you write all the lyrics, Tom?
TH: Yeah.
MM: What're the more cryptic songs, like "One Barrel Spent" or "DDT Fin 13", about?
(embarrassingly long pause)
TH: Other Minneapolis bands are kind of, like, from the heart. I think Halo of Flies is kind of from the ass ... I don't know. A

lot of songs, we just write 'em down while we're recording. I don't wanna put a huge stock in it, it's not like I'm trying to convey anything, it's just kind of bullshit ...
MM: Bottom line is, Halo of Flies don't mean anything.
MM: Oh no. I'm crushed.
MM: Sorry to burst your bubble.
TH: I mean, it means something to you

...
JA: You were hoping for a big answer ...
MM: Yeah ... Did you intentionally de-emphasize the vocals by not using lyric sheets, mixing the vocals down more ...
MM: Lyric sheets are money. It's true ...
TH: It's a nickel a crack, man ...
MM: And also, for everything up until *Headburn*, we had these two-week spurts. A week to learn the songs, a week to get 'em good enough to record ... we had two weeks to go from nothing to song to product to handing them the finished tape ...
JA: There's a lyric sheet on *Garbage Burn*. That's a European album — *Garbage Rock* and *Headburn*, and then the a-side of "No Time". It's on What Goes On. No domestic sales.
TH: It's not supposed to come out over here because it, y'know, conflicts with sales.
MM: Yeah, but everything comes over sooner or later ...
AS: We'll find copies.
TH: Twin/Tone's giving them (the Euro-

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HALO OF FLIES DISCOGRAPHY

Tim was kind enough to provide a discography of Halo of Flies' recorded output to date. The list is of particular interest to collectors, since much of Halo of Flies' material is out of print and extremely hard to come by. (A copy of the first single was selling at a convention recently for \$100.) To fill out a complete collection, here's what you'll need:

7" singles

- "Rubber Room"/"Thoughts in a Booth", "Three More Quarters" (Amphetamine Reptile, January, 1986)
- "DDT Fin 13"/"PCP", "Can't Touch Her" (Amphetamine Reptile, March, 1986)
- "MD 20/20"/"Pipebomb", "Sinner Sings" (Amphetamine Reptile, August, 1986)
- "Richie's Dog"/"How Does It Feel to Feel" (Amphetamine Reptile, May, 1987)
- "No Time"/"You Get Nothing" (Amphetamine Reptile, September, 1988)

12" eps

- Garbage Rock* (Twin/Tone, October, 1987)
- Headburn* (Twin/Tone, November, 1988)

Collections

- Four From the Bottom* (Amphetamine Reptile, March, 1988) — cassette-only compilation of first four Amphetamine Reptile singles, plus extra track, "Drunk"
- Garbage Burn* (UK What Goes On, July, 1988) — both Twin/Tone eps on one lp

Tracks by Halo of Flies also appear on the following compilations:

- Big Hits of Mid-America Volume IV* (Twin/Tone) — "Rubber Room"
- Beautiful Happiness* (UK Shigaku) — "Richie's Dog"
- Dope, Guns, and Fucking in the Streets, Vol. 1* (Amphetamine Reptile) — "Insecticide Stomp"
- Mondo Stereo* (Away From the Pulsebeat) — "Time For a War In 1988"

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FLIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

pean label) Soul Asylum, so they're not going to fuck with them on something as petty as Halo of Flies.

MN: What was growing up like for you guys?

JA: What does that have to do with the band?

MN: I don't know. It came to me while I was writing this stuff down.

MM: Oh, Minneapolis childhood life is so great ...

JA: Beautiful.

MM: ... trees, and lakes ...

JA: Peace ...

MM: ... snow ...

JA: ... the Grateful Dead ...

MN: Did you guys grow up in Minneapolis?

MM: ... Volkswagen vans ...

JA: Well, Tom spent a lot of his time in Michigan. He didn't get to Minneapolis until what, eighth grade?

TH: Eighth or ninth, something like that ...

MN: You knew each other when you were kids?

TH: Yeah, after I moved here ... Me and John lived in the same neighborhood, like a block apart ...

JA: (whining) 'Til I got kicked out of my cover band ...

MM: And we met up in radio. It was a high school station, KBEM ...

TH: Five thousand watts, mind you!

MN: What sort of music did you guys listen to when you were younger?

JA: ABBA ...

TH: Yeah, ABBA rules.

JA: Josie and the Pussycats ...

MM: The Beatles, for me. Not for them though.

TH: Let's talk about the bands we have common ground in.

JA: The Jam, the Buzzcocks ... Hendrix?

TH: Yeah.

AS: What do you listen to these days?

JA: The Jam, the Buzzcocks ...

MN: Any new stuff?

MM: I'm not gonna admit to anything.

TH: Some Aussie stuff, like feedtime and X ...

MM: He's the underground-new band dude.

TH: (snarling) If it's out, I got it!!!

JA: If they're dead, I have it.

AS: You can't afford to put out singles but you can afford to buy Australian singles?

TH: Seattle, man. The record collector's heaven.

AS: Are you into all that stuff on K and Sub/Pop?

TH: Um, I don't know. K is mostly folk stuff. Some Sub/Pop stuff. I never really got heavily into the Seattle sound. That *Deep Six* compilation, that was really good but after that it was just like, hardcore or something, the same thing over and over ...

MN: Were you in the Marines?

TH: Yeah.

AS: That was what the whole "two weeks" thing was about?

TH: Yeah.

MN: When did you get out?

TH: Last December 7.

NF: What was that like?

TH: It was fabulous.

AS: What did they think of Halo of Flies?

TH: They didn't know it existed.

MN: You never played the Officer's Club or anything?

TH: You're in a barracks with two other guys that listen to Top 40, so why cause any trouble? It makes life easier for them not to know what's going on.

MN: Here's another stupid question. Does Halo of Flies have any coherent ethos or band philosophy?

TH: No. Fuck, no.

MM: To spread love throughout the land ...

TH: Fuck off, man ...

MM: ... to the brethren and sistren as one.

JA: I have a theory on that.

MM: What?

JA: That Halo of Flies is a band of dichotomies.

MM: I told you, man. The only thing that ties us all together is that we're all anally retentive. That's it.

AS: (to TH) What are you doing now if you're out of the Marines?

TH: Just working over at a window factory.

MN: What do the rest of you guys do?

JA: I'm going to school.

All: Ooooooh ...

MN: Where are you going?

JA: University of Minnesota.

MM: Pardon me?

JA: I might be going off to San Diego next fall but I don't know about that yet.

NF: What are you studying at Minnesota?

JA: Radio, TV, film production ... Tim works at a restaurant.

MM: Ooh, it's a very nice restaurant.

MN: You work at a restaurant?

MM: Oooooh, it's great.

TH: What do you most like about working at a restaurant?

(Real long pause)

MM: The babes.

MN: How does running Amphetamine Reptile Records fit in with Halo of Flies?

JA: (to TH, who is smoking) Hey, why don't you sit here so I can be upwind. Both figuratively and ...

TH: Well, they're two separate entities. They really don't play on each other heavily.

MN: What about the bands you've worked with, like Mudhoney, Thrown-Ups, God Bullies? Do you think they're doing similar things to what Halo of Flies is doing? I mean, maybe not specifically musically, but ...

TH: Well, not similar, but ... it's just a matter of, I'm only going to do stuff I like, and obviously I like the stuff I write, otherwise I wouldn't do it. So it ties together that way to a degree, I guess.

JA: I've always found Tom to have a real knack for being able to predict what's going to be a big hit ...

AS: You ran the label when you were in the Marines?

TH: Yeah, that's when it started. It first started with Halo of Flies, and it's not like we were cranking' stuff out heavily, so I had time and money to do other stuff, and Steve Turner, the guitar player for the Thrown-Ups, was a friend of mine out in Seattle — he'd just gotten kicked out of Green River, and he played me a tape, and it just kind of took off from there.

MN: So that was the first record you did besides the Halo of Flies stuff?

TH: Yeah, the Thrown-Ups.

MN: What upcoming releases are going to be on Amphetamine Reptile?

TH: *Dope, Guns, & Fucking in the Streets*, Vol. II, with Tar, Helios Creed, God Bullies, and Lonely Moans.

MN: It seemed like there was a big difference between the sound of the earlier singles and the Garbage Rock ep, and the most recent single was somewhere between the two. Was this due to different production circumstances, different formats and labels, or what?

MM: Everything except for Garbage Rock was 8-track. That has a lot to do with it.

AS: What was Garbage Rock?

MM: Twenty-four, if you can imagine that.

MN: Wasn't that produced by Steve —

MM: Fjelstad. And do we say something nice about Steve, or do we ... ?

TH: At least he tried.

MM: That was a mess. It was extremely expensive. We're used to working very quickly. Twenty-four track was really unnecessary, and the time needed to get

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FLIES

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it right, we didn't want to waste. Plus, Tom had to be home three days after we started, so it was just one shot, we did it, that's it.

MN: The colored vinyl was nice.

JA: It would be a lot better if the record didn't blow.

TH: We were fighting Fjelstad's tendencies to make everything sound the same.

MN: So what did you do with the new 12" (Headburn)? Were you deliberately trying to go back to the earlier sound?

MM: Once again, money ...

TH: The whole problem with *Garbage Rock* was that it cost us \$1200, which was completely insane ...

MM: Which we're still paying for.

TH: Yeah, that's pretty much the standard — it comes out of the royalties, so in essence we're still paying for it because we still have to sell records to cover it.

MM: (pointing at NF) How come *he* hasn't asked any questions? (now speaking to NF) Where were you born? What was growing up for you like?

NF: Hey, I just came along for the ride.

MN: What do you think your upcoming projects are going to sound like?

TH: I couldn't really say. It's never really had an intent or a direction, a purpose ...

JA: Mostly I've found, it's like, "What the fuck are you putting that out for? That sounds like shit!" So it ends up being stripped down.

TH: What?

MM: With the exception of the one time I put reverb on your snare.

MN: Did you record *Headburn* on 8-track, in the same studio?

TH: Yeah, same place as most of the singles.

JA: It's a matter of, *Garbage Rock* cost \$1200 and *Headburn* cost \$130 so it was kind of like, fuck the sound ...

MM: When you talk about "No Time", it was a different drummer, so we had to get him into what we were doing.

AS: Why did you change drummers there?

MM: 'Cause John quit.

AS: How'd you get him back?

MM: He called up and said he was bored one day. Wasn't that how it went?

JA: I don't know, actually.

TH: I don't think anybody knows.

MM: We don't talk about it.

AS: It's good to get your feelings out into the open ...

TH: No it's not!

MM: It wouldn't be good right now, I don't think.

TH: I thought it was just kind of a mystical fuckin' occurrence, man, I mean it was just weird. No one said "We're a band again," or nothing, I don't know ...

MM: No one said that in the first place.

JA: So we're not really a band, we're just a group of individuals ...

MM: Just Tim, Tom, and John.

TH: The Pep Boys.

MN: Who thought up "Halo of Flies"? Where'd that come from?

TH: From an Alice Cooper song.

MN: Wow. What do you think is going to happen with *Headburn*? Is *Twin/Tone* going to push it?

TH: I don't know. I've been trying to dig into that. I can't figure out ... I've had a couple people from other labels tell me that they could have sold at least three times more (of *Garbage Rock*), so I'm not really sure what's going on, if it's just the 12" format that's not selling, or *Twin/Tone*'s procedure on distribution ...

We're not really sure.

MM: It's three songs. Three songs aren't as easy to push as an album.

TH: There's no advertising budget. I think I've seen two or three ads in the whole time we've been working with them.

MN: I've seen some ads for *Garbage Rock*. (MM acts surprised.) You know, I saw one in *Forced Exposure*, with a garbage barge that said "The sweet smell of success."

MM: God. Who writes that stuff?

MN: I've seen your ads for the *Amphetamine Reptile* stuff ...

TH: Well, for that stuff I don't need ads. It's not like I'm trying to sell twenty thousand ...

MN: But all that stuff is going pretty fast, isn't it? I tried to get a copy of *Dope, Guns, and Fucking in the Streets* Vol. 1 [compilation 7" with *Mudhoney*, *Halo of Flies*, *U-Men*, and *Thrown-Ups*] from you, and I couldn't.

TH: That one went faster than the others 'cause I accidentally underpressed it. It was supposed to go out with a magazine of only 500 copies, but the guy never put the mag out, so I'm sittin' with 500 when I should have done more than that.

MM: Would you ever redo that?

TH: The *Dope, Guns* might eventually come out as an album, if I ever get up to volume III.

MN: You got that title from the *MC5*, right?

TH: Yeah. It's kind of a mutated version of what they used to say.

MN: I thought they said, "Dope, rock and roll, and fucking in the streets."

TH: Rock and roll, guns, what's the difference?

MN: How do you feel about how *Halo of Flies* are getting received by the music scene in general?

TH: The reception from the press has been really great ... A majority if not all of the bad reviews are out of Minneapolis.

MM: And they put a 3" x 5" picture next to the bad review.

TH: I haven't really seen that many bad reviews so I can't say anything negative about the press ... We've been treated great by most fanzines and stuff, a lot of interest by those types ... It's just that we haven't crossed over to the average dumbfuck who doesn't look for anything, it's gotta be pretty much force fed to him.

So that's pretty much where we stand right now. We've gotta break that barrier.

MN: Do you get a lot of mail for the *Amphetamine Reptile* stuff?

TH: The people that look for stuff, the people that are interested in music and go out and look through the bands and find out what's going on, know about us, and that's usually the type of people that start fanzines ...

AS: Or read them ...

TH: Yeah, or read them, but the average shmuck who will only listen to something if all of his friends are going to that show, he's like, "Wow, this ain't too bad," and he runs out and buys the next *Replacements* record ...

MM: So how do we break that barrier? By playing more?

TH: I don't know. If I knew how to do it we'd have done it ...

MN: Is that something you want to do?

TH: Yeah. I mean, it's money, y'know? I got no problems with that.

MM: I want to quit my day job!

MN: That's interesting, because in the issue of the (WHPK) Magazine I showed you (Fall 1988), there's an interview with Grant Hart, talking about among other things why in retrospect the move to Warners had been a bad one because he found he didn't really like having a bunch of shitheads in *Spuds MacKenzie* t-shirts ...

TH: Hey, if I can get their fucking money, man, they can kiss ...

MM: We don't have to go home with them after the show ...

TH: Yeah. I mean, we don't have to live with them, talk with them, or deal with them. All I want is their money. We're gonna play what we're gonna play, regardless of the money or not. I mean, obviously we could pick a different approach if we wanted money as much as I seem to be saying, but on the other hand, it's like, I'm gonna take what I'm doing and milk it for every cent I can.

MM: We could get a synthesizer ...

MN: You could get Steve Fjelstad to produce more records.

JA: They're going to get a drum machine to replace me.

MM: We have done that a couple of times.

MN: Never on record, though.

MM: Yeah. On *Dope, Guns*, on the *Mondo Stereo* compilation ...

JA: Well, just 'cause you don't have them ...

MN: About Otto's *Chemical Lounge* — what's your connection with them, personal or sound-wise?

(They look extremely panicked.)

TH: That's some weird lie. We have nothing to do with Otto's ...

MM: Who were they, anyway?

MM: Aw, come on!

MN: I think I have their single somewhere ...

TH: Some Minneapolis band.

MM: They're bad!

TH: It's just really weird, there's another *Hazelmeyer* I don't know, he played on the first single ...

MM: I think I met that guy once, in high school!

TH: And *Anglim*'s cousin ...

JA: My evil twin!

TH: ... was in that band. Otherwise, no,

it's just a weird coincidental name thing, no.

MM: Why is he [John] turning red?

TH: It's his cousin, and he's kind of embarrassed by his cousin's actions ...

MM: Tainted the family name ...

JA: Jack Anglim was a evil person ...

TH: And the other *Hazelmeyer*, it's just a typo on the back of the record ... his real name was like *Hazelstein* or something.

MN: This is going to look weird in print ... [Actually, Otto's *Chemical Lounge* self-released one 7" in 1983, which John Anglim and Tom Hazelmeyer played on, and an lp on *Homestead* in 1985, which Anglim played on. As to why they refuse to talk about it, your guess is as good as ours.] Here's a good one: What do you think about the Minneapolis music scene?

MM: Oh, it's great. My favorite bands all wear flannel shirts. I've got a closet full of 'em.

JA: I've been intentionally remaining ignorant ...

TH: Well, there's the underground, like the *Bastards* and *Cows* and stuff, there's like a new ...

MM: New breed!!!

TH: Most of the biggies aren't ... I mean, I'm not hardcore going-to-clubs or anything, but as far as I can see the Soul

Asylums and the *Replacements* and the *Huskies* aren't really around anymore ...

like, I know Bob Mould and Grant used to be always getting their fingers in ... stuff, and since I've been back I haven't seen Bob Mould around and he always used to do *Man Sized Action* and *Rifle Sport*. Same with the *Replacements*.

MM: Haven't played the city in years.

TH: They're really not Minneapolis bands anymore.

JA: One of the things that's helped us is that we've always reached beyond Minneapolis, and a lot of bands try to make a name for themselves in Minneapolis and then go beyond it.

MM: Yeah, we did the opposite. We didn't see a review [in Minneapolis] until after *Spin* ...

MN: You've been in *Spin*? This is news to me.

MM: It was just a one-inch column, it wasn't like the cover or anything ...

MN: Now that you've finally done it, what do you think of live performance?

TH: Ah, it sucks.

JA: It's really nice to get that feeling of coming off stage and being able to fart ...

MM: "It's over! We get to drive home!"

MN: You could fart onstage too, if you

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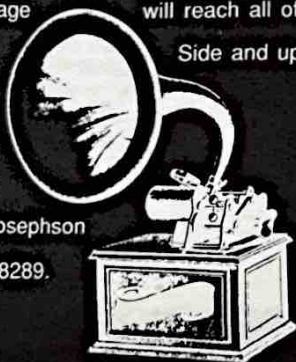
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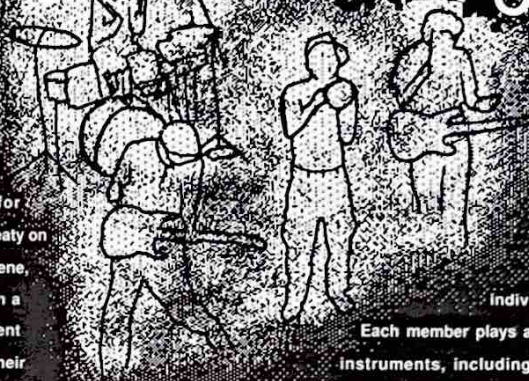
A woman

named Ethel told them, "You'll never go anyplace with a name like UNGHI!" But the band Unghi, sensing a need for something fresh and beaty on the Chicago music scene, got their "traffic jam on a stick" working and went all over the place. Their music has appeared on

WNUR's *Hog Butcher for the World* compilation and on a cassette release called *Beware*. They played on their own at clubs like CBGB's and Chicago's Exit, and at a skateboard competition in Ohio. They opened for big names like the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Durutti Column, Revolting Cocks, and most recently Nitzer Ebb. And earlier this year they released their debut lp *Cement*, which spans several periods of different musical styles, ranging from hardcore to what one might call "skate rap", all united by a body-jacking beat. The record is impressively self-produced, except for three of the nine tunes which boast production by Hypo-Luxa and Hermes Pan, a.k.a. Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker (who have also worked with Ministry, Revolting Cocks, Pailhead — some people truly never sleep). Unghi's label, H-Gun Productions, has also produced numerous musical short films, including a Medusa's commercial, a Ministry video, and the CD video of Revolting Cocks' "Stainless Steel Providers".

Members Stevie Dread, Ben "Grimm", and "Earache" Eric met while attending Chicago's School of the Art Institute, and being motivated, along with "Snarl" Carl, by a shared craving for fresh art, music,

ONOMATOPOEIA!



and pleasure, started to compose songs using various individual contributions.

Each member plays any and all available instruments, including traditional guitar, bass, and drums, as well as new inventions, one being a series of car horns hooked up to a drum pedal — the aforementioned "traffic jam on a stick". At the Art Institute they also met occasional collaborators Marc Siemer, the sculptor who built the car horn instrument; James Bond, a film projectionist; and Eric Matthies, an all-around stage tech man. The list will go on as the band continues to cook up their crafty creations.

Unghi's most immediate new project is their next record, and according to Carl, their first step will be to rob a gas station to raise the necessary dough. Stevie Dread talks of being dissatisfied with doing compilation albums anymore, since the band doesn't seem to fit in with the growing numbers of rock/thrash bands on the Chicago scene. Nevertheless, they realize the advantages of this uniqueness. "We're going to suffer for a while, but people are going to look back on when we first started. I think the shit we're doing is pretty important," Dread says. And all four members seem to agree that all things considered, they'd rather be in the band anyway. What's next after the new record? Says Eric, "We're going to pioneer Christian funk." So there, Ethel.

— Marianne Potje

FLIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

really wanted to.

MM: No, Tom stops songs in the middle if he hears a fart.

TH: "All right, Goddammit, who farted?"

MN: Who do you think *Halo of Flies'* biggest influences are?

MM: Patsy Cline.

JA: ABBA.

TH: Nothing that John or Tim listen to ... It depends. Like on the first single, we'd been listening to a lot of Soft Boys. It just kind of depends on what's going on. I don't particularly see any one particular band I listen to working its way in. It's just kind of a conglomeration.

MN: What stuff do you listen to on any given day? What did you listen to this morning while you were getting dressed?

TH: Helios Creed.

MM: The Who. Buzzcocks, when we were loading up the van.

TH: Feedtime. X [not the LA band, the Australian band].

MM: Who's dat? Who's feedtime?

TH: Australian band.

MM: Ohhh.

MN: Have you heard their covers album? Cooper-S?

TH: No, I hate covers.

MN: I was listening to it the other day. It's okay.

TH: I don't know. (snarling) I hate covers!

AS: If you hate covers, how come you covered the Creation song?

MM: 'Cause we hate covers.

MN: How far can you see *Halo of Flies* going?

TH: About five months.

AS: No MTV?

TH: Naaah. I mean, we're all probably going to be splitting up. John's planning on going to San Diego. I'd like to get back out to Seattle for good ...

MM: And I'm going to rot in Minneapolis.

TH: It's all kind of tentative.

JA: We've been playing together for eight years, so ...

AS: So you never planned any of this? It all just happened?

TH: Yeah. It just kind of worked out ...

MM: It only works out if you don't commit

to it.

TH: Kind of like, "We live together, but we're not married." It's also that I came back (from the Marines), and the only people I'd played with enough and knew enough — that were, y'know, more than competent enough to grab the stuff and do what had to be done, were, like, these two guys ...

MM: "More than competent"!? Aw, thanks ...

TH: Well, Tim sucks. John's more than competent, but Tim, we have to kick him around once in a while.

MN: What else is coming out on *Amphetamine Reptile*?

TH: A Tar Ip — I'm working on a manufacturing and distribution deal for lps; singles, I'm going to do the same that I've been doing. Maybe the Lonely Moans. Maybe the Thrown-Ups. God Bullies, for sure.

MN: Would you ever consider reissuing the old singles as an lp?

TH: The singles? What's the point?

MM: So I don't have to play my 7" and get it all scratched up.

MN: Are there any new bands people should keep an eye out for?

TH: Bastards and Cows.

MN: Any final comments?

MM: Pray that the van makes it home.

DINNER

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three or four years ago. And I was in a band called One Man's Head which used to have the drummer from the Leaving Trains. A guy who used to sing for the Offbeats used to be in One Man's Head.

AS: Is that how you got the song "Sad"?

MM: Yeah.

MN: Did the Offbeats ever record that song?

MM: I don't know. It was a total thrash song. Speed that song up like fifty times, that's how that song originally sounded. It was like a total thrash. [She sings a bit] Kind of Dickies-sounding. I don't really know what that kind of music is called, but that's what we were. One Man's Head was kind of like that. But, you know, nothing big.

MN: What kinds of influence comes out in your music?

MM: Everything. Everything from

hardcore to country. They're all there. All the influences are there.

MN: What do you spend your time listening to?

MM: We were just talking about this today. The radio ...

MN: I meant, what kind of music.

MM: Top 40 radio. That's what I listen to, at work ... I listen to the records my

roommate buys, the new stuff that's coming out, but I usually put them away after a week ... I listen to country. I don't really listen to a whole lot of music.

CO: There's not any one special ...

AS: Do you ever hear any bands and say, "Wow, that's what I really want to listen to"?

MM: Every now and then an album comes out that I like, and I play it to death. There are a lot of bands that I listen to for a little while.

MN: What's the Columbus music scene like? Are you part of it?

MM: Yeah, we're part of it, I'd say. We're a big part of it. It's real live-music oriented ... There are like three or four bands in Columbus that are on labels. Royal Crescent Mob, Great Plains, The Gibson Brothers are starting to get a lot of attention, The Toll ...

MN: How far can you see *Scrawl* going?

MM: We have no plans. None whatsoever. That's our whole philosophy.

MN: Any upcoming plans for recording?

MM: Yeah. I know that we're going to do two more records.

CO: Contractual obligations.

MM: But that's OK, it's not like we feel obligated. We will go as far as we go. I don't want to go on tours forever where 10 people show up — I won't do that, because that's not good for you.

MN: That would be pretty frustrating.

MM: I wouldn't want to do that. Then again, I wouldn't want to get to the point where it wasn't fun to play anymore because the venues were too big. We'll just do it until we don't anymore. I don't know — maybe we'll all go off and do solo projects.

CO: Yeah.



